

Colonel George S. Patton and The 22nd Virginia Infantry Regiment

By Stan Cohen

Colonel George S. Patton, a resident of Charleston, West Virginia, before the outbreak of the War Between the States, was one of the most colorful figures of that war and his grandson, General George S. Patton, Jr., of World War II fame, carried on the military tradition of the Patton family.

Colonel Patton, who sided with his native Virginia at the outbreak of the conflict, participated in numerous battles in Virginia and West Virginia and fell mortally wounded while leading his troops at the battle of Winchester in September, 1864. Patton's commanders in the field had high respect for him both in military and personal character and if he had lived out the war he probably would have been a leader in the reconstruction of the South.

The Kanawha Riflemen

Patton came to Charleston in 1856 from Richmond to engage in the practice of law, part of the time being associated with Mr. Thomas Broun. Patton was a man of ability, good looks, and social attainments, as well as a man of honor and high courage.¹ He had graduated from the Virginia Military Institute in 1852 and when he came to Charleston, he formed a military company similar to the well-known Richmond Light Infantry Blues. The company was first called the Kanawha Minutemen, but in 1859 the name was changed to the Kanawha Riflemen. The young aristocrats and men of high standing in the city flocked to join this company and its bright uniforms and sharp drill were well-known throughout the area. It was said that the Kanawha Riflemen was the best drilled company in the entire Confederate Army, and this was due mainly to the superb military training given by Patton.

The company was organized in 1856 and was reorganized in 1858 and 1861. When Virginia joined the Confederacy in April, 1861, the Riflemen became on May 8th, Company H of the 22nd Virginia Infantry Regiment. Patton later rose to commander of the regiment.

When the war broke out, the Riflemen issued the following statement:²

We, the Kanawha Riflemen, hereby declare it to be our fixed purpose never to use arms against the state of Virginia, or any other

¹ Ruth Woods Dayton, *Pioneers & Their Homes on the Upper Kanawha* (Charleston, 1907), 244.

² *Forest Hall, Hollands, the Magazine of the South* (May, 1933), 13.



COLONEL GEORGE S. PATTON

From Sons of Confederate Veterans Magazine, by courtesy of Boyd B. Stutler



Elm Grove, former home of Colonel Patton now located at 1316 Lee Street, Charleston.



Colonel Patton and the Union spy Pryce Lewis dining at Camp Tompkins, near Charleston, in the summer of 1861. From *The Spy of the Rebellion*, by Allan Pinkerton (G. W. Carleton & Co., N.Y., 1883), 215.

southern state, in any attempt of the administration at Washington to coerce or subjugate them. That we hereby tender our services to the authorities of the state, to be used in the emergency contemplated.

Captain Noyes Rand of Charleston said of Patton:³

He was as accomplished and as handsome as a Chesterfield and as brave as Chevalier Bayard. Graduate of a law school, he was a martinet in discipline and had the marked bearing of the typical gentleman's soldier, and of the most pleasant personality and address.

Captain Rand said of the Riflemen:⁴

In the grand old state of Virginia there were few like it. The drills were frequent and well attended. It attracted such wide reputation as to efficiency and fine appearance that it was invited to fairs in Virginia and neighboring states. The company was armed with a short Neiss Rifle, with bayonet, cartridge box and scabbard. It consisted of about one hundred men, including a brass band.

Organization of the Kanawha Riflemen, taken from the plaque erected by the United Daughters of the Confederacy to their memory on the Kanawha Boulevard in Charleston, follows:⁵

Commissioned Officers:

First Organization 1856

Captain George S. Patton
1st. Lieut. Andrew Moore

2nd. Lieut. Nicholas Fitzhugh
3rd. Lieut. Henry Daniel Ruffner

Second Organization 1858

Captain David L. Ruffner
1st. Lieut. Richard Q. Laidley

2nd. Lieut. Gay Carr
3rd. Lieut. John P. Donaldson

Third Organization 1861

Captain Richard Q. Laidley
1st. Lieut. John P. Donaldson

2nd. Lieut. Henry W. Rand
3rd. Lieut. Alanson Arnold

Non-commissioned Officers and Privates—1858

Arnold, E. S.
Barton, Norman
Blaine, Charles
Boswell, Martin
Bradford, Henry†
Brook, J. T.
Brooks, W. B.
Brown, Jo. M.
Brown, Thomas L.
Brown, J. Alliene
Cahell, H. Clay
Caldwell, William
Carr, John O.
Carr, Gay
Chambers, John
Chowning, Charles†
Clarkson, A. Q.
Carr, William

Cox, Frank
Cushman, William
DeGruyter, M. F.
Doddridge, J. E., Jr.
Doddridge, Philip
Fry, James H., Jr.
Grant, Thomas T.
Hale, John P.
Hansford, Carroll M.
Hare, Robert
Hopkins, J.
Lewis, James F.
Lewis, Joel S.
Lewis, John†
McClelland, Robert
McFarland, Henry D.
McMullen, John
McQueen, Archibald

³ Ibid. 11.

⁴ Ibid. 11.

⁵ W. S. Laidley, *History of Charleston & Kanawha County & Representative Citizens* (Richmond, 1911), 294-97.

Malone, William
 Mathews, John
 Miller, H.
 Miller, Samuel A.
 Noyes, Benjamin*
 Noyes, Frank
 Noyes, James B.
 Noyes, James B., Jr.
 Noyes, John
 Noyes, William
 Parks, Bushrod
 Parks, Creed
 Patrick, Dr. A. S.
 Patrick, John
 Quarrier, Joel S.
 Quarrier, Monroe
 Quarrier, William A.
 Rand, Noyes
 Read, Fred N.
 Reynolds, Fenton M.
 Reynolds, William
 Roberts, Thomas
 Ruby, Edward
 Ruby, John C.
 Ruffner, Andrew
 Ruffner, Daniel
 Ruffner, David

Ruffner, Joel
 Ruffner, Meredith
 Rundle, John
 Shrewsberry, Andrew
 Shrewsberry, Joel
 Singleton, Albert
 Smith, Issac Noyes
 Smith, Thomas
 Smithers, David
 Snyder, W. B.
 Spessard, Jacob
 Summers, George W., Jr.
 Summers, William S.
 Swann, John S.
 Swann, Thomas B.
 Teays, Stephen T.
 Thompson, Cameron L.
 Thompson, Thornton
 Turner, Benjamin F.
 Walls, Richard*
 Watkins, Joseph F.
 Wehrle, Meinhardt†
 Welch, George
 Welch, Levi
 Wilson, Henry
 Wilson, W. A.
 Armstead, William—colored cook.

† Killed in the war.

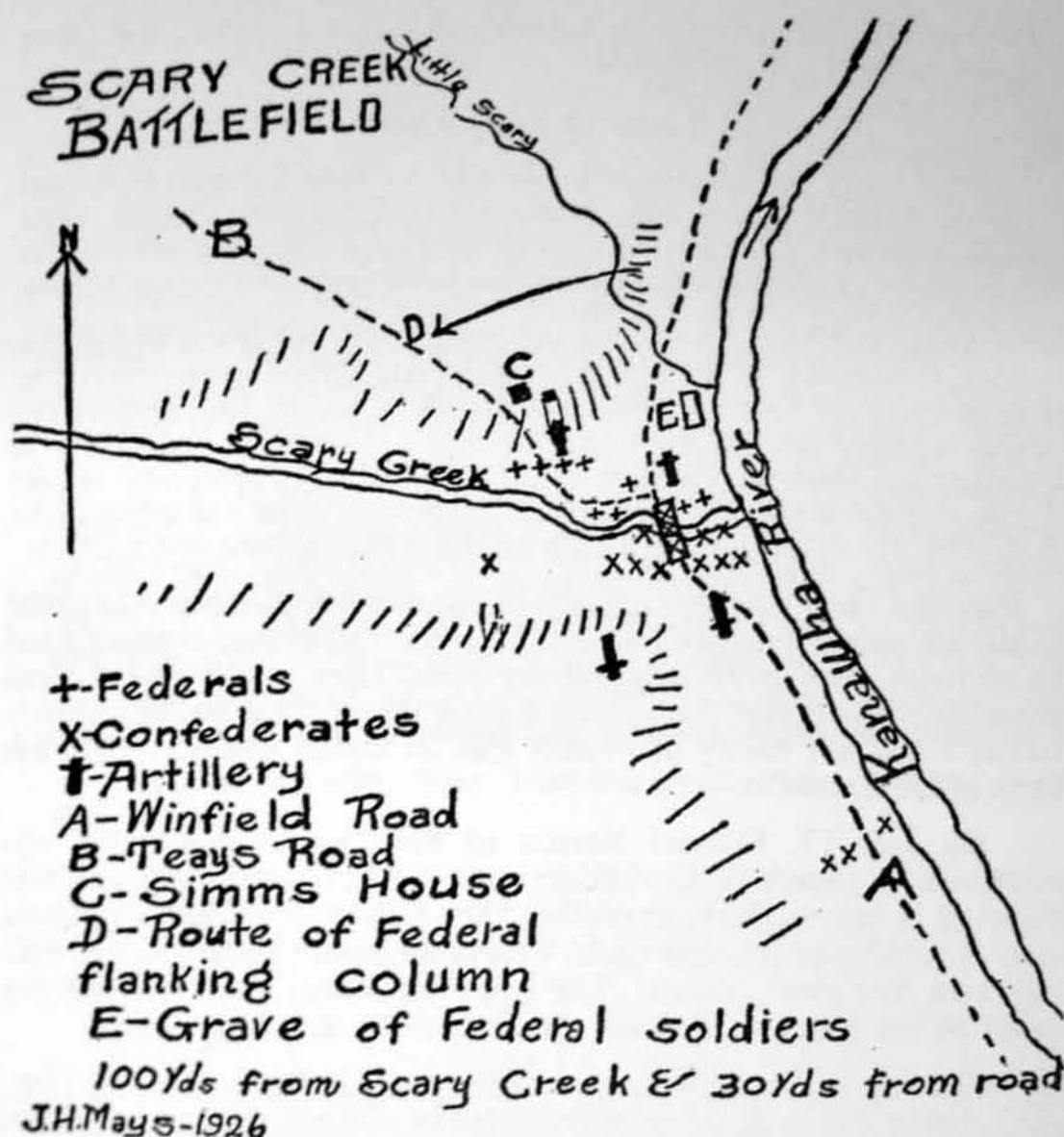
* Did not enter Confederate Army in 1861.

Colonel Patton in Charleston

In 1858, Patton bought Elm Grove, an old house built in 1834, which stood in the vicinity of present Dunbar Street and the Kanawha Valley Hospital. The house was moved in 1906 to its present location—1316 Lee Street. He settled in Elm Grove with his wife until he entered the Confederate Army in 1861. There also was born his son who was the father of the famous George S. Patton, Jr., of World War II fame. Mrs. Patton and the children left Charleston during the war to settle in Goochland County, Virginia and Elm Grove was sold to Andrew B. Hogue.

Colonel Patton and The Union Spy Pryce Lewis

In the summer of 1861, Colonel Patton was taken in by Pryce Lewis, a Union spy posing as an English nobleman. He had been sent to the Kanawha Valley by Allan Pinkerton, head of the United States Secret Service, to determine the Confederate strength in the Valley. The spy meeting some Confederate cavalymen near St. Albans was taken to their commander, Colonel Patton, who was stationed at that time at Camp Tompkins. Lewis deceived Patton by saying that he was on a sightseeing trip up the Valley. Patton sent Lewis on up to Charleston and there he was refused a pass by General Wise to proceed to White Sulphur Springs. The spy stayed in Charleston a few days and Patton came up to see him and advised



SCARY, Putnam County, was the scene of the first battle in the Kanawha Valley in the Civil War, when Ohio troops were repulsed by Confederates under George S. Patton, grandfather of General George S. Patton of World War II. Courtesy of Charleston Gazette, Reprint from July 19, 1953 issue.

him to go on to the east without a pass. Lewis, realizing that General Wise was suspicious of him, left Charleston and went down to Logan and then made his way back to Ohio where he reported his findings to the Union generals.⁶

At the start of the war, Governor John Letcher of Virginia commissioned Henry A. Wise, Colonel John McCausland, and Colonel C. Q. Tompkins to raise, in the Kanawha Valley and adjacent regions, independent troops to fight for the Confederacy. Colonel Tompkins raised a considerable force which afterwards

⁶ Allan Pinkerton, *The Spy of the Rebellion* (New York, 1883), 210-26.

became the 22nd Virginia Infantry Regiment, which was later commanded by Colonel Patton.

Battle of Scary Creek

One small but notable battle in which Colonel Patton took part was the battle of Scary (also Scarey) Creek, Putnam County, West Virginia on July 17, 1861. This was the first battle on the Kanawha River and was a battle of blunders due to inexperience on both sides.

General Henry Wise was the commander of the Confederate forces in the Kanawha Valley and he led 2,600 men down the Kanawha River to Charleston several days before the battle. His forces camped at the Littlepage farm on Kanawha Two Mile in Charleston. General Jacob Cox of Ohio was commander of the Union forces in the area and he led a few thousand troops up the Kanawha River by boat from Point Pleasant to Red House.

A few days before the battle, Colonel Patton commanded 900 men stationed at the mouth of Coal River. Patton had been ordered by General Wise to retire gradually from Scary Creek, below Coal River, to Coal Mountain and the passes across Coal River, concentrating his forces finally at Bunker Hill on Upton Creek, on the left bank of the Kanawha.

On July 17, Colonel Norton of the 21st Ohio Infantry approached the mouth of Coal River with 1,200 Union troops and one piece of heavy artillery, expecting the support of 1,800 additional men. Learning of this approach, Patton returned to Scary Creek with 800 men and two cannon. The opposing forces met in a narrow valley at the junction of Scary Creek and the Kanawha River.

Fighting began early in the afternoon and about 5 o'clock p.m., panic broke out in the Confederate ranks. Patton dashed on horseback to rally his men and while getting most of the men back in the ranks received a bullet in his left shoulder, which took him off the field. With victory near at hand for the Union troops, Albert Jenkins arrived with his Mounted Rangers and drove the Union troops from the field. The Confederates lost three killed and several wounded, and the Union lost fourteen killed and many more wounded.

Shortly after the battle, General Wise received orders from Richmond to withdraw from the Kanawha Valley as soon as possible thus losing the advantage of the victory at Scary Creek.

In a letter to General Samuel Cooper, Adjutant and Inspector-General of the Confederate Army, dated July 19, 1861, General Wise stated: "Colonel Patton is doing as well as having done nobly well deserves. His arm I hope will not have to be amputated."

¹ *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union & Confederate Armies*, (Washington, 1881-1901) Series I, vol. 2, part 1, 73.



Plaque at Carnifex Ferry Battlefield State Park, Nicholas County, West Virginia.



Henry Patterson's house. Carnifex Ferry Battlefield State Park.

Before the battle Colonel Patton was united briefly with his family in Charleston, the last time they were to be together in Charleston.

Battle of Carnifex Ferry

At the battle of Carnifex Ferry, and for a while afterwards, the 22nd Regiment was under command of Colonel Tompkins. The regiment was shifted back and forth between Generals Wise and Floyd before the battle; this shifting was one small issue in the bitter rivalry between the two Southern generals. Colonel Tompkins threatened to resign over this shifting of his command and this rivalry had a marked effect on the conduct of the war in West Virginia.

Patton's troops were attached to General Floyd during the fighting, although no mention of him was found in the official reports of the battle. The battle will be discussed here briefly as it was one of the most important battles fought in West Virginia during the war.

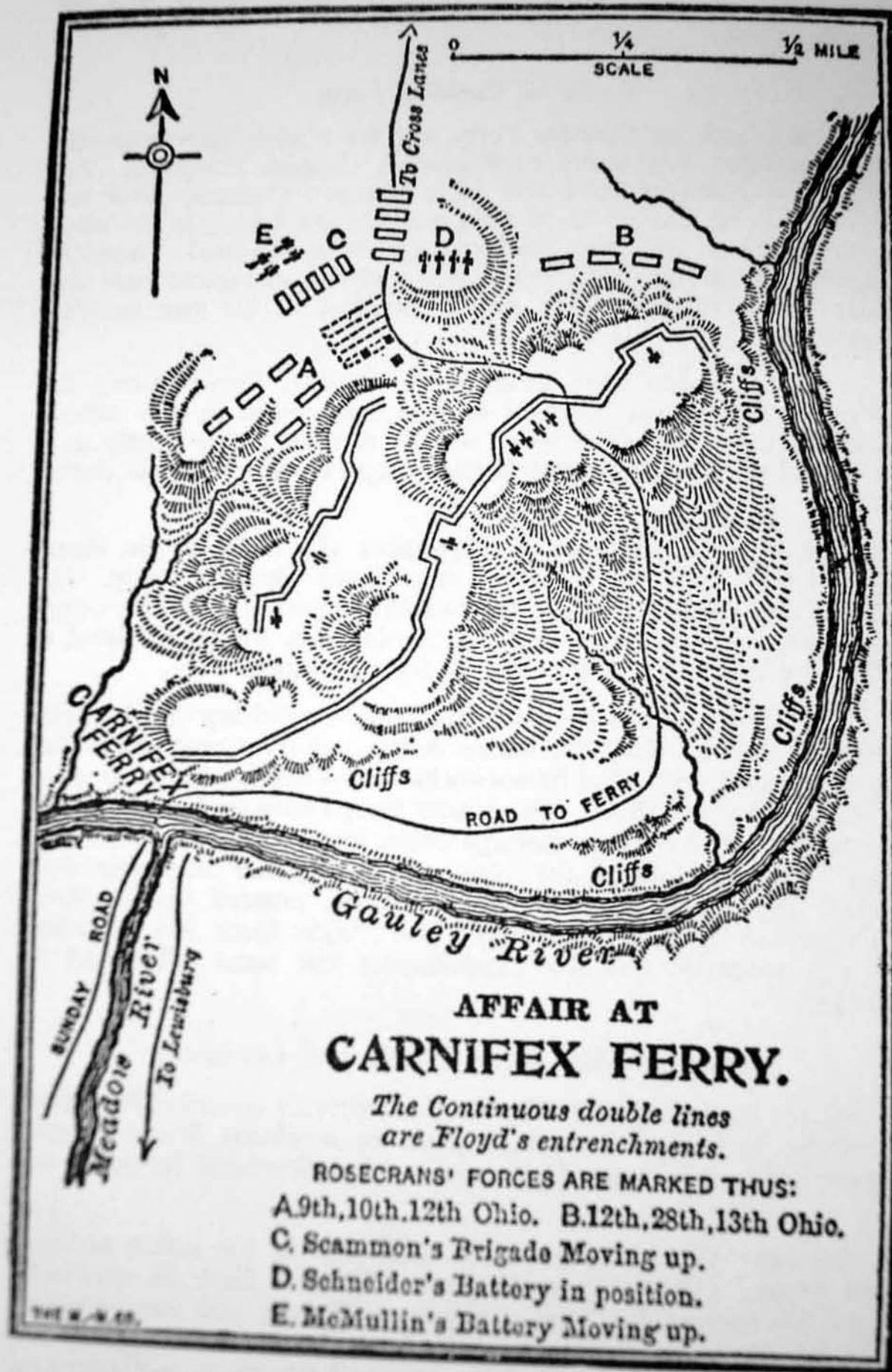
The battle was fought on September 10, 1861 on the Henry Patteson farm, one and one-half miles from Carnifex Ferry. The Union Army consisted of six and one-half regiments of Ohio troops under General Rosecrans, and the Confederate forces consisted of 1,800 Virginia troops under General John B. Floyd.

General Rosecrans had marched from Clarksburg into Nicholas County to destroy the Confederate Army and the Confederates had dug strong and concealed breastworks near Carnifex Ferry to make a determined stand there. The Union troops advanced unknowingly against these strong works through dense woods and sustained heavy losses. On the night of the 10th, with the battle seemingly won, General Floyd abandoned his fortifications, crossed Gauley River and retreated toward Lewisburg. The Union force lost 17 killed and 141 wounded and the Confederates lost none killed and 20 wounded.

Action at Giles Court House and Lewisburg

At the beginning of 1862, the Confederates occupied Princeton, Lewisburg and other important posts in southeast West Virginia. Brigadier-General Henry Heth commanded Southern forces in the area.

On May 10, 1862, the 22nd took part in the action at Giles Court House (Pearisburg), Virginia. General Heth in command divided his forces; the 22nd, Chapman's Battery and one company of the 8th Virginia Cavalry comprised one force. As a result of the action the Union force was driven beyond the town and retreated to the narrows of New River where he made his last stand. Colonel Patton was wounded while leading his regiment against the enemy



at the narrows. His wounds were not serious. He received considerable notice in the reports of Heth and Colonel John McCausland after the battle. As a result of this action, the Union forces were driven back into the Kanawha Valley and the key to the approach to the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad (Pearisburg) was in the hands of the Confederates.

Thirteen days later, the 22nd participated in an attack on Lewisburg, West Virginia. The force under the command of General Heth consisted of 2,100 men. Union troops in Lewisburg at this time were under the command of Colonel George Crook and consisted of the 36th and 44th Ohio Regiments, the 2nd West Virginia Cavalry and a battery of mountain howitzers. Although Heth had equal strength to the Union, he was severely defeated due to panic among his troops and he retired back to his camp at the narrows of New River. The losses were as follows: Union 14 killed, 60 wounded; Confederates—40 killed, 66 wounded, 100 captured.

Battle of Fayetteville

In the early summer of 1862, General W. W. Loring was placed in command of all Confederate forces in the middle region of West Virginia. The force consisted of the 22nd, 36th, 45th, 50th, 51st, 53rd, and 60th Virginia Regiments, the 26th and 30th Battalions, Virginia Infantry, and Bryan's, Chapman's, Lowry's, Otey's, and Stamp's Batteries, along with General A. G. Jenkins's cavalry forces. These forces were divided into three brigades, commanded respectively by Generals John Echols, J. S. Williams, and Colonel G. C. Wharton. Colonel Wharton's brigade consisted of the 22nd and 51st Regiments, and Clarke's battalion of sharpshooters.

Colonel J. A. Lightburn assumed command of the Union Department of the Kanawha from General Cox. The Union troops in the summer were deployed at Raleigh Court House, Fayetteville, Summersville, Camp Ewing, ten miles east of Gauley Bridge, and several places along the Kanawha River. Their headquarters was at Gauley Bridge.

The Confederate Government directed General Loring to invade the Kanawha Valley from the narrows of New River and to hold it to obtain the much needed salt from the valley. On September 6, 1862, he started his drive from the narrows.

Colonel Siber, Union commander at Raleigh Court House, withdrew his force to Fayetteville upon the advance of General Loring and thus set up the battle of Fayetteville.

On the morning of September 10, Colonel Wharton's brigade was supposed to attack the Union lines, but a guide took them a roundabout way and the enemy's batteries were not in the position which had been described. Two of the batteries, however, were well

constructed and so arranged as to command by a crossfire a cleared space of 1,000 yards. After the hard march of two miles, over very rough terrain, the Confederates were very exhausted. It was decided to hold a position to command the turnpike leading from Fayetteville to Montgomery's Ferry, to prevent the passing of the enemy. Colonel Patton was stationed to the right with a portion of the 22nd, with long range guns to guard a part of the road. Before the Confederates could get into a good position, the Union forces attacked but were repulsed. Several more attacks were made but each was repulsed.

The fighting continued until after sunset, but the Confederates could make no headway. Early on the morning of the 11th, Colonel Siber and his men retreated unopposed toward Gauley Bridge. At Cotton Hill he made a stand, the 22nd moving to turn his left flank. The Union troops retreated across the Kanawha River and started down to Charleston. The legend of the Confederate brass cannon, which was thrown over Cotton Hill originated at this time. An expedition to find this cannon was formed in 1954 by the Charleston *Daily Mail* but it was not found.

The 22nd continued to pursue the Union troops to Charleston, where it supported the left of the battle line before the city and participated in the battle which advanced to the Elk River where the Union troops burned the bridge across the river.

Between September 6 and 16, the Confederates lost 18 killed and 89 wounded, and the Union lost 25 killed and 95 wounded. The 22nd lost one killed and 9 wounded.⁶

The Jones-Imboden Raid

The 22nd Regiment participated in the Jones-Imboden raid from April 20, to May 14, 1863. This raid had as its purpose the destruction of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and the weakening and destruction of Federal control in Central West Virginia, and to gather horses, cattle, and recruits for the Confederate Army. The two commanders—General Jones and General Imboden—made the mistake of dividing their forces and their raid was largely ineffective.

In early April, the 22nd was stationed at Lewisburg and on April 13, was ordered to leave and combine with Imboden's forces at Huttonsville on the 18th. They marched up to Knapps Creek where their wagons were left and the men carried their provisions from thereon. This entire movement was done in complete secrecy.

With Imboden leading one wing of the Confederate forces, he struck north and occupied Beverly on the 24th, Buckhannon on the 29th, Weston on May 3rd. On May 6th, he moved out of Weston toward Sutton and Summersville because of a concentration of

⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 28, pp. 1, 205.

Union forces in the area. On the 13th, he met General Jones at Summersville, and from there they retired back to the Greenbrier Valley. The raid lasted 37 days, moving more than 400 miles over bad roads, and for a part of the time, on half rations. Confederate casualties for the entire operation were only 2 killed and 14 captured.

Although putting a scare into the Union forces in Northern and Central West Virginia, the raid was largely ineffective due to splitting up of the Confederate forces.

Battle of White Sulphur Springs

General Averell set out from Winchester on August 5th for the purpose of making a raid into the Greenbrier Valley and of reaching the Virginia Tennessee Railroad. Colonel Patton was in command of the 1st Brigade and he moved up by Anthony's Creek between Huntersville and Warm Spring to intercept Averell. Patton had the 22nd and 45th Virginia Infantry Regiment, the 23rd and 26th Battalions of Virginia Infantry, the 8th Virginia Cavalry Regiment, the 37th Virginia Battalion, and Chapman's Battery. General Averell with 4,000 men had under his command the 16th Illinois Cavalry, Company C, 14th Pennsylvania Cavalry, the 3rd West Virginia Cavalry, detachments of the 2nd and 3rd West Virginia Mounted Infantry, and two West Virginia batteries of six guns.

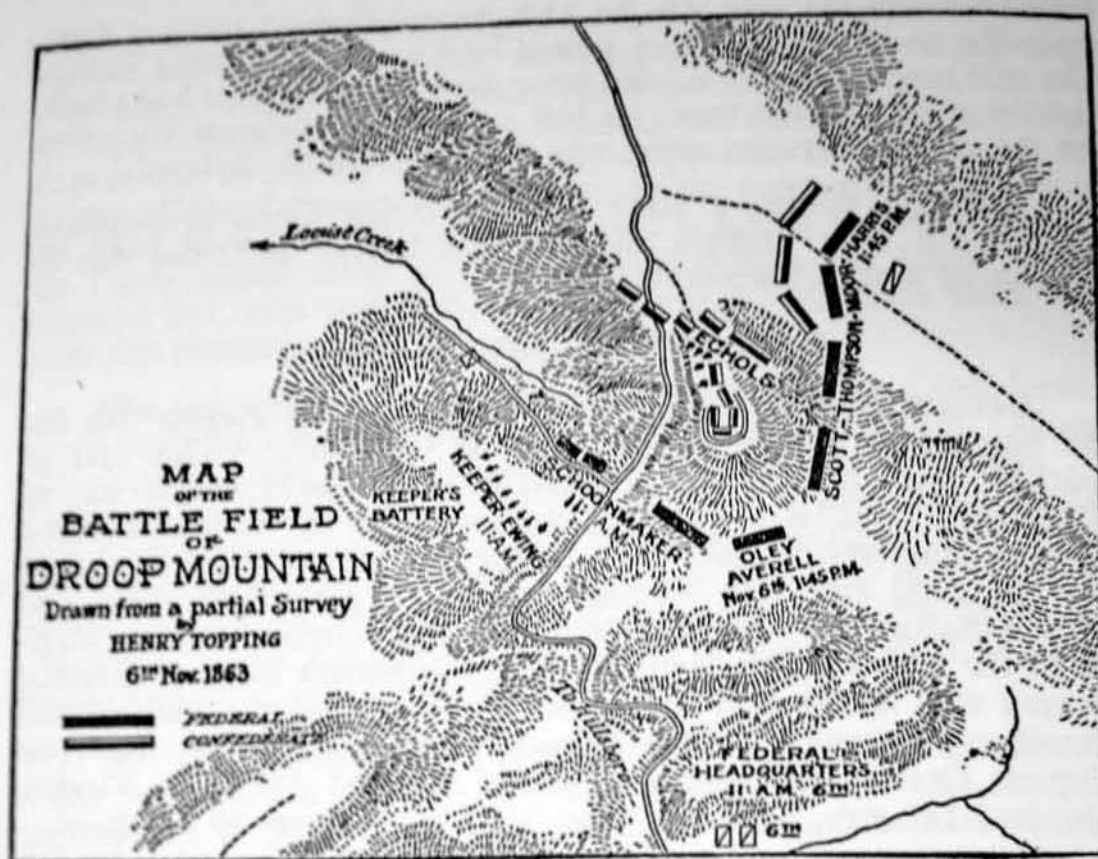
Going toward Staunton on August 26, from the west, General Averell suddenly turned back and unexpectedly encountered Patton a few miles east of White Sulphur Springs at Rocky Gap. The fight lasted from early in the morning of the 26th until about noon on the 27th, when the Union forces drew off, blocking the roads behind them and rendering rapid pursuit impossible. Union losses were about 218 men while the Confederate losses were 156 men. Patton's Brigade suffered 20 killed, 129 wounded, and 13 missing. The 22nd lost 9 killed, 60 wounded, and 10 missing.

General Samuel Jones reported on August 27th the following passage in his General Orders No. 37: "No one can regard it as invidious distinction to mention particularly the commander of the 1st Brigade—Colonel G. S. Patton. He exhibited admirable judgment in placing his troops in action, and his gallantry was conspicuous throughout the day."⁹

Battle of Droop Mountain

In the fall of 1863, the Confederate troops under General John Echols controlled the entire Greenbrier Valley (a distance of 170 miles). Colonel Patton at this time had taken over command of the 1st Infantry Brigade consisting of his own 22nd Regiment (taken over by Major R. A. Bailey), and the 23rd Virginia Battalion.

⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 29, pt. 1, 53.



From Official Records-Atlas

This was a decisive battle and was a Confederate defeat. After the battle the Confederates were never able to seriously threaten West Virginia. Union troops under General W. W. Averell departed from Beverly the first week in November to raid the Greenbrier Valley, while another force left Charleston, heading east. General Echols took his force to the crest of Droop Mountain in Pocahontas County and fortified it. His force also included the 14th, 16th, 19th, and 20th Virginia Cavalry, Chapman's, Jackson's and Lurly's batteries. The 22nd was deployed along the road by the Greenbrier River.

The battle commenced on November 6 and by 3 o'clock the Confederates had been driven from the crest, and by 4 o'clock the troops were in full retreat. Colonel Patton's Brigade bore the brunt of the fighting. Echols with his entire army retreated intact and was not pressed by the Union troops. With both sides having nearly equal strength (1,200 men) the casualties were quite heavy. The Confederates suffered 275 casualties, while the Union forces suffered 119. Patton's 22nd Regiment suffered 113 casualties out of 550 men.

Battles in 1860

In February, 1864, Major-General John C. Breckinridge received command of the Confederate Department of Virginia from

Major-General Samuel Jones. His headquarters was at Dublin, Pulaski County, Virginia. Colonel Patton's 22nd Regiment was part of General Echols's Brigade which also included the 23rd and 26th Virginia Battalions. General Breckinridge's command was placed under General Early and saw considerable action in Early's Shenandoah Valley Campaign, and some service with Lee facing Grant in the Wilderness Campaign. Echols's brigade entered the Shenandoah Campaign in May, 1864, with 2,150 men and by September the brigade was down to about 275 men present for duty.

Patton's part in the battle of New Market was noteworthy. He played a major role in the battle which resulted in a Confederate victory.

In early May, 1864, General Franz Sigel of the Union Army invaded the Shenandoah Valley from Martinsburg, driving towards Staunton. His invasion was a measure to harass the left flank of Lee's forces. On May 5, Breckinridge was ordered by Lee to advance to Staunton to protect his flank. The two forces met in the vicinity of New Market, Virginia, on May 15, and fought the battle that ended in defeat for the Union forces. The 22nd had approximately 550 men present at the battle and they took part in the desperate charge against the Union center which caused them to retreat.

At the battle of Cold Harbor in early June, Patton, who had taken over Echols's Brigade, was attached to Lee's forces in the Wilderness. In a letter written to General Breckinridge from Cold Harbor on June 1, Patton stated:¹⁰

General: Hearing from the left that General Finegan was ready to move his skirmishers, I charged with mine to the rifle pits in my front connecting with General Wharton's left, capturing 12 or 15 prisoners. My skirmishers were there subjected to a heavy fire from the left flank, and were driven in. After mine had come in I received a note from General Finegan which is inclosed. My skirmishers cannot (sic) unless the enemy are dispossessed in General Finegan's front. Shall I repeat the experiment without General Finegan's co-operation?

No report was found of the 22nd's losses at Cold Harbor, but it can be assumed that they were high, as this was one of the bloodiest battles of the war.

After Cold Harbor, Patton's Brigade was transferred back to Early's command in the Shenandoah Valley, and took part in the raid in Maryland that threatened Washington. At the third battle of Winchester on September 19, Patton was to fight his last battle and to die a gallant soldier.

General Sheridan had 40,000 men to resist the 12,000 men of Early's command at the battle. The battle lasted all day and in the evening, the Confederate left was turned and they fled through the

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 36, pp. 2, 464.

streets of the town. Patton halted his horse in a narrow street and called to his troops to turn back. As he stood up waving his sword, he was shot and killed. This happened just before he was to be promoted to Brigadier-General.

In the inspection report of Patton's Brigade by Wood Bouldin, Jr. on September 29, he stated:¹¹ "Colonel George S. Patton, commanding the brigade, an officer of highest gallantry and standing and a gentleman irreproachable in character, was left in the hands of the enemy mortally wounded!"

Thus ended the career of one of the little known but most fearless, gallant soldiers of the South. Although he fought in only a few major battles of the war, his devotion for the Lost Cause lasted until the end, and his famous grandson, General George S. Patton, Jr. inherited the same qualities which drove him forward to victories in the Second World War.